

Course Syllabus

Instructor: James McGinnis

Investigative/Data Reporter for Gannett

Class location: Annenberg 310

Class hours: 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m., Tuesdays

Office Hours: By request.

Phone: 267-738-8353

E-mail: Jfmcg@temple.edu

WHO CAN TAKE THIS COURSE?

Journalism Research is available to journalism majors who have passed:

- Journalism 1111 (Journalism and Society)
- Journalism 1196 (Writing for Journalism)

WHAT ARE THE COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES?

Specific learning objectives for each student include:

- Advancement in reporting and writing skills
- Improved grammar demonstrated through accurate, concise news stories
- Increased proficiency with Associated Press style
- Familiarity with local and federal FOI laws and requests
- Understanding of library resources
- Proficiency in the use of public records
- The ability to authenticate and verify live and electronic sources

WHAT ARE THE ASSIGNMENTS AND WHEN ARE THEY DUE?

There are 10 assignments for this course. Some of will be stories. Some will be writing exercises. Others will be simple research.

All work should be emailed to Jfmcg@temple.edu (<mailto:Jfmcg@temple.edu>). Completed assignments should be sent in a Microsoft Word format. One letter grade (-10 points) will be deducted for every 24 passed the due date. In other words, 30 points would be deducted from an assignment received three days late.

HOW IS MY FINAL GRADE CALCULATED?:

- Stories and Research Assignments: 70 %
- Final Story 15%
- Writing Exercises 15%

Grading Scale: An "A" means that your work is exceptional. A "B" means that your work is above average. A "C" means that your work is average. A "D" means that your work is below average. An "F" usually means that you have failed to provide assignments.

Grade appeals: I do not discuss individual grades during class. Students must support grade appeals with detailed written evidence to backup the appeal.

ERRORS AND GRADING

- On all assignments, students will lose points for issues with AP Style, grammar and punctuation. The point structure will be explained before each assignment and the points deducted may change during the course of the semester as you progress through the course. For example, a student may lose (-2) two points for grammar issues in the first graded assignment and (-4) six points for grammar issues in the fifth assignment.
- Students will lose points for any statement which reflects the journalist's personal bias or judgment.
- Ten points will be deducted for each factual error.

WHAT IS THE FINAL STORY/ENTERPRISE PROJECT?

All students must complete a final project piece, which accounts for 15 percent of your final score. This piece developed in class over the course of several weeks and in-class discussions. Your final story must be at least 800 words and must include at least two, different research/data sources that are credible. Those sources cannot include other forms of journalism, including blogs.

Choosing the topic: You must come up with the story idea and get a "green light" from your instructor on the story.

Story Development: There will be an established timeline for developing the final story. Class time will be set aside for discussing story topics, possible sources and submitting an outline.

Getting a high score: To receive a maximum score (100 points) on your final story, it must include interviews with at least three people. You must provide their full names. If interviewing an expert, you want to include their full name, occupation and affiliation, i.e. "*according to James McGinnis, adjunct instructor at Temple University.*" If interview an everyday person, you'd want to provide their full name and where they are from, i.e. "*said James McGinnis, of Philadelphia.*" To receive a score above 89, the story must include at least one interview in addition to the basic instructions

WHAT MATERIALS DO I NEED FOR THIS COURSE?

Required readings: No book is required for this class.

COURSE POLICIES

Academic honesty and plagiarism: Cheating and plagiarism on any examination or assignment will result in automatic failure of the course and recommendation to the University Disciplinary Committee for further disciplinary action. Please note that plagiarism includes fictitious quotes and/or sources, work copied from others without proper credit, including Web sites.

Academic dishonesty means that you have turned in an assignment for this class from other class. Again, the result will be a failing grade in the class. The section in italics below is quoted verbatim from the Temple University Bulletin for 2009-2010.

Temple University believes strongly in academic honesty and integrity. Plagiarism and academic cheating are, therefore, prohibited. Essential to intellectual growth is the development of independent thought and a respect for

the thoughts of others. The prohibition against plagiarism and cheating is intended to foster this independence and respect.

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of another person's labor, another person's ideas, another person's words, and another person's assistance. Normally, all work done for courses -- papers, examinations, homework exercises, laboratory reports, and oral presentations -- is expected to be the individual effort of the student presenting the work. Any assistance must be reported to the instructor. If the work has entailed consulting other resources -- journals, books, or other media -- these resources must be cited in a manner appropriate to the course. It is the instructor's responsibility to indicate the appropriate manner of citation. Everything used from other sources -- suggestions for organization of ideas, ideas themselves, or actual language -- must be cited. Failure to cite borrowed material constitutes plagiarism. Undocumented use of materials from the World Wide Web is plagiarism.

Academic cheating is, generally, the thwarting or breaking of the general rules of academic work or the specific rules of the individual courses. It includes falsifying data; submitting, without the instructor's approval, work in one course that was done for another; helping others to plagiarize or cheat from one's own or another's work; or actually doing the work of another person.

Statement on Academic Freedom: Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom. The University has adopted a policy on Student and Faculty Academic Rights and Responsibilities (Policy # 03.70.02) which can be accessed through the following link:
http://policies.temple.edu/getdoc.asp?policy_no=03.70.02

The policy encourages students to first discuss their concerns with their instructor. If a student is uncomfortable doing so, or if discussions with the instructor do not resolve the student's concerns, an informal complaint can be made to the Student Ombudsperson for the student's school or college. Unresolved complaints may be referred to the dean for handling in accordance with the school or college's established grievance procedure. Final appeals will be determined by the provost.

Special accommodations: This course is open to all students who meet the academic requirements for participation. Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss the specific situation as soon as possible. Contact Disability Resources and Services at 215-204-1280 in 100 Ritter Annex to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities

Controversial Subject Matter: In this class we will be discussing subject matter that some students may consider controversial. Some students may find some of the readings and/or comments in class (or in discussion conducted through a Blackboard forum) very challenging. Our purpose in this class is to explore this subject matter deeply and consider multiple perspectives and arguments. Students are expected to listen to the instructor and to one another respectfully, but of course are free to disagree, respectfully, with views expressed in class, in electronic discussions through Blackboard, or in readings.

Religious Holidays: If you will be observing any religious holidays this semester which will prevent you from attending a regularly scheduled class or interfere with fulfilling any course requirement, I will offer you an opportunity to make up the class or course requirement if you make arrangements by informing me of the dates

of the religious holidays **within two weeks** of the beginning of the semester (or **three days** before any holidays which fall within the first two weeks of class).




Attendance: Attendance in this course is crucial. Recognize that if you are absent from class, you will miss the lecture, discussion, and any in-class activities. It is your responsibility to obtain notes from the classroom discussion and other issues pertaining to assignments due dates, etc. An excused absence may be granted in cases of: emergencies, bereavement, medical contingency, or authorized athletic participation. Appropriate documentary proof - an original document – must be provided within **five** working days of the absence, for said absence to be considered “excused.”












Lecture Etiquette: Students are expected to prepare for each class by reading and/or viewing the assigned material. Students must arrive in class on time and not allow PDA's and/or mobile phones to interrupt the class. Students are expected to observe the Temple University student code of conduct and participate in the learning process in a professional, respectful, and courteous manner. In other words, sending or receiving text messages, using a mobile phone, or surfing the Web by checking personal email or engaging in discussion on social networking sites during a lecture is disrespectful and disruptive to the learning environment. Written consent from the instructor is required for electronic recording of lectures.











Class Preparation and Participation: This class meets 3 hours per week. Students should expect to spend at least 2 to 4 hours preparing before attending class. This preparation includes reading, listening to, or watching local, national, and international news content. Attendance and punctuality are expected. You are expected to consistently provide informed and insightful contribution in class discussions. Your contributions should demonstrate that you have a grasp of the material covered.

Communication: Ensure that all e-mailed communication is written in a professional style and includes a signature. In other words, I reserve the right to ignore written communication that is written in an unprofessional manner. Verbal communication with classmates and instructors must also be conducted in a professional and respectful manner.

Course Summary:

Date	Details	
Tue Jan 15, 2019	 Course Orientation/Conversational Writing/Satisfactory Sourcing (https://templeu.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=54608&include_contexts=course_39642)	5:30pm to 8pm
Tue Jan 22, 2019	 Researching the World and Private People (https://templeu.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=54632&include_contexts=course_39642)	5:30pm to 8pm
Tue Jan 29, 2019	 Researching education, Excel (basic formulas) (https://templeu.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=86335&include_contexts=course_39642)	5:30pm to 8pm

Date	Details	
Tue Feb 5, 2019	 Researching Accidents & Disasters (https://templeu.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=54634&include_contexts=course_39642)	5:30pm to 8pm
Tue Feb 12, 2019	 Researching Crime & Punishment (https://templeu.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=54635&include_contexts=course_39642)	5:30pm to 8pm
Tue Feb 19, 2019	 Researching via social media (Guest speaker Christina Kristofic) (https://templeu.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=54633&include_contexts=course_39642)	5:30pm to 8pm
Tue Mar 5, 2019	 No class -- Spring Break (https://templeu.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=57778&include_contexts=course_39642)	5:30pm to 8pm
Tue Mar 12, 2019	 Researching Health & Death (https://templeu.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=57774&include_contexts=course_39642)	5:30pm to 8pm
Tue Mar 19, 2019	 Researching profits and non-profits (https://templeu.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=57772&include_contexts=course_39642)	5:30pm to 8pm
Tue Mar 26, 2019	 Researching academic sources, studies and polls (Guest speaker Kristina Devo) (https://templeu.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=57776&include_contexts=course_39642)	5:30pm to 8pm
Tue Apr 2, 2019	 Researching your project (Guest speaker Crissa Shoemaker) (https://templeu.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=86336&include_contexts=course_39642)	5:30pm to 8pm
Tue Apr 9, 2019	 Researching Courts & Lawsuits (https://templeu.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=57779&include_contexts=course_39642)	5:30pm to 8pm
Tue Apr 16, 2019	 Researching the Environment (Guest Speaker Kyle Bagenstose) (https://templeu.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=57773&include_contexts=course_39642)	5:30pm to 8pm
Tue Apr 23, 2019	 Researching a career, final story outlines (https://templeu.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=57780&include_contexts=course_39642)	5:30pm to 8pm

Date	Details	
Tue Sep 3, 2019	 Graded Assignment #1: Writing Challenge/Working with Sources (https://templeu.instructure.com/courses/39642/assignments/146655)	due by 5:29pm
Tue Sep 10, 2019	 Graded Assignment #2 Travel Research (https://templeu.instructure.com/courses/39642/assignments/146645)	due by 5:29pm
Tue Sep 24, 2019	 Graded Assignment #3 Travel Story (https://templeu.instructure.com/courses/39642/assignments/146648)	due by 5:29pm
	 Graded Assignment #4 - Concise Writing Challenge (https://templeu.instructure.com/courses/39642/assignments/146651)	due by 5:29pm
Tue Oct 1, 2019	 Graded Assignment #5 Crime Research (https://templeu.instructure.com/courses/39642/assignments/146652)	due by 5:29pm
Tue Oct 8, 2019	 Graded Assignment #6 Crime Story (https://templeu.instructure.com/courses/39642/assignments/146653)	due by 5:29pm
Tue Oct 15, 2019	 Writing challenge three: Working with numbers (https://templeu.instructure.com/courses/39642/assignments/420816)	due by 5:29pm
Tue Oct 29, 2019	 Graded Assignment #7 Health Research (https://templeu.instructure.com/courses/39642/assignments/146661)	due by 11:59pm
Tue Nov 5, 2019	 Graded Assignment #8 Health Story (https://templeu.instructure.com/courses/39642/assignments/146664)	due by 5:29pm
Tue Dec 17, 2019	 CAPSTONE: Final Story (https://templeu.instructure.com/courses/39642/assignments/146666)	due by 11:59pm